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## Some First Seed Sown in Japan

By Hon. Gorham D. Gilman, of Boston.

The present state of affairs in Japan calls to mind an incident which came under my personal observation in the "forties," while I was a resident of Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands. I give the story according to my best recollection after the lapse of over half a century.

An American whale ship cruising in the Japan Sea discovered a wrecked Japanese junk floating far out from land. On boarding it they found only one boy living out of the entire crew. He was kindly taken charge of by the sympathetic captain and in due time brought to Honolulu. Here he was placed in the hands of that large-hearted and kindly disposed seaman's chaplain, the Rev. Samuel C. Damon, who had held this position for some years, and had won a very enviable reputation for his kindness and attention, especially to seamen. It mattered but little to him whether it was a "jack tar" or the admiral in command, or to what country the person belonged. They were all alike of his flock. His kindly attitude towards those especially from the Pacific Ocean won for him the cognomen of "Father Damon of the Pacific, the well-known seaman's chaplain."

The young Japanese could not have been placed in better hands. He was kindly cared for in every respect, reared in the chaplain's family and sent to school. In due time he showed a special capacity for mathematical studies, in which he became quite proficient. He pursued the study of navigation and became an expert in matters pertaining to sea calculations, finding particularly much pleasure in working out nautical problems. Later it was apparent that there was a decided method in his mind for the further use of this particular branch of knowledge. As he grew up he began to express himself as very desirous to return to his native island. He was warned that it would be a very hazardous time to make the journey, as the emperor was exceedingly rigid in the enforcement of the laws regarding exclusion, and that a death penalty was attached to any one who left the island without the consent of the authorities or who returned after an ungranted absence. This did not in the least abate the young man's desire to go back to his home.

It was thought best, after some consultations, to grant his very ardent wish, and Mr. Damon very readily secured from the people of Honolulu an ample subscription fund, with which a fine whaleboat was bought, with sails, compass, quadrant, and books, etc., and a quantity of provisions was provided, ready to carry out the young man's most patriotic wish at the first favorable opportunity. Somewhat later a whale ship in the harbor of Honolulu was bound on a cruise to the Japan Sea. The captain was interested in the story of the young man, and consented to take him as near to the coast of Japan as he thought it would be safe for his ship to go. The young man and his boat were taken on board and sailed out of port for the Western seas. His friends thought it a foolhardy voyage, but wished him Godspeed on his way.

In due time the whale ship neared the coast of Japan. The boat was made ready, charts were given for his direction, sail was set, and the daring young Japanese bade good-by to his friends on board the ship, and started on his solitary journey without any knowledge of what was before him. When I think of this adventurer the sailors' old adage comes to mind: "There is a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft and looks out for the life of poor Jack."

Years passed, and nothing was heard from him. No letter or word came from him to those who had befriended him in the far-off island of Hawaii, and the incident had almost passed from mind. One summer's day a Japanese man-of-war, with the flag of the Rising Sun, was seen off the port of Honolulu, the first one that had crossed the sea from west to east. Her actions indicated a familiarity with the harbor. She was soon at her moorings. A boat was lowered and an officer was rowed to the wharf. A fine-looking officer in full uniform stepped out of the rowboat, and, without showing the hesitation of a stranger, proceeded as if he knew the way without asking assistance, and passed up the street. His steps led him at once to "Chaplain Lane," the residence of good Father Damon, to whom he presented himself as the Japanese waif whom he so kindly befriended in years gone by. This is the story he told of his strange career since he left Honolulu with his boat.

When he reached the shores of Japan he and his boat were immediately taken possession of by the officials, and he was taken to headquarters, where he was secreted from the curious crowd. His boat, his manner, and the information which they received from him impressed the high officials, that he was something more than an ordinary person, and information was sent of the peculiar circumstances to the chief officers of the government. He was ordered to be sent to the government offices, where he was kept as a state prisoner for some years without intercourse with the outside world, and made instructor of some of the young sons of the highest dignitaries of the empire, probably their first introduction of knowledge from the Eastern world.

After a time it was thought advisable to send a ship of war on a voyage that would command a respect for the Island Kingdom of the Far East, and this young man was appointed to be lieutenant and sailing master of the ship. After a short visit, with the usual courtesies and entertainments of Honolulu society, the man-of-war turned her prow westward for her own country.

It is believed that the young man could not have passed the years he did under the roof and instruction of Father Damon without receiving wholesome ideas in regard to the formation of his own character or what constituted good government and the duty of nations. Mr. Damon's Christian usefulness, not only as a seaman's chaplain, but also as a collaborer of the American Board, had made a very deep impression on his mind. It may be assumed, I think, that in his teaching, both during and after his confinement by the officials of Japan, this young man would have imparted such instructions as he had received, and that it would bear good fruit among those with whom he came in contact.

This incident occurred before Commodore Perry opened Japan to the commerce of the world; and it may fairly be presumed that this young man, returning home after years of absence, brought to the Japanese officials and people a better knowledge of the outside world and of what constituted a free people than they had ever known before. Thus we are led to believe that the seed sown by an American missionary in Hawaii bore fruit in the Island Kingdom of the Western sea. "Cast thy bread upon the waters and thou shalt find it after many days."

Manila, P. I., March 1, 1905.

To the Editor of Harper's Weekly:

Sir,—The following conversation that actually took place in Manila strikes me as being significant and very amusing.

American housekeeper to Filipino servant: "Why is it, Ramon, that you worked so well for the Spaniards and

for so little? They treated you very badly, while I treat you very well; they paid you only two pesos per month, and you demand of me twenty-five; I do not understand it."

Ramon replied: "Ah! Senora, the Spaniards were our superiors. You Americans are our equals."

I am, sir, R. De L. H.



DELAYING THE WOLVES.

—Chicago Record Herald.

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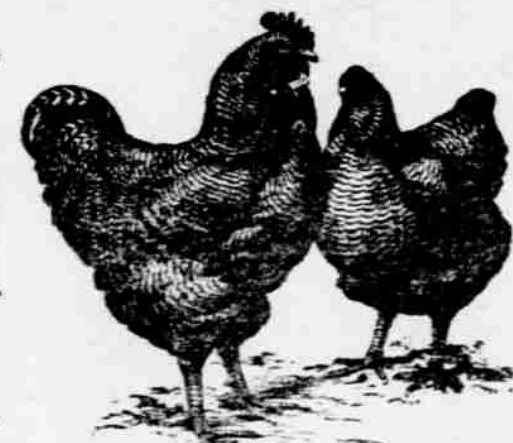
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